

For Immediate Release
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Contact:
Larry Wargowsky, Refuge Manager
Necedah National Wildlife Refuge
608/565-2551

U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE EXTENDS COMMENT PERIOD FOR NECEDAH NWR DRAFT COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PLAN

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Service) is extending the comment period for Necedah National Wildlife Refuge's revised Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Environmental Assessment. Originally scheduled to close Nov. 20, 2001, an extended comment period will continue through Jan. 25, 2002.

"Our focus over the next 60 days will be to talk with people who are interested in this planning process and address any issues they might have with the management plan we're proposing," said Larry Wargowsky, Refuge Manager at Necedah NWR. "There has been a lot of misinformation circulating about this plan and I want to ensure everyone has ample opportunity to get correct information and make informed decisions about the future of the refuge and their community."

The revised draft CCP was released to the public on the Service's planning web site on October 12, 2001, however three components of the appendix were inadvertently missed and were not posted until early November. Refuge and regional Service staff felt that the failure to post the full document warranted extending the comment period.

"We know that people care about this planning project and we want to make sure that everyone has enough time to review all of the pieces of the draft comprehensive conservation plan," Wargowsky said. "We don't want our oversight to cost anyone the opportunity to review the full document."

The draft CCP was initially released for public review in September 1998. The plan was revised based on the comments received in that review, and those revisions are reflected in the current draft of the document. Including the extended comment period for this draft, the entire time for comment on all drafts will exceed 150 days.

The plan is posted at <http://midwest.fws.gov/planning/necedahtop.htm>, and paper copies of the revised draft comprehensive conservation plan are also available at libraries in Necedah, Mauston, Nekoosa, New Lisbon, Wisconsin Rapids and Tomah. It is also available at the Refuge Headquarters.

Comments on the plan can be submitted electronically through the website or written comments can be addressed to the Refuge at: Necedah National Wildlife Refuge; U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; Attention: CCP Comment; W7996–20th Street West, Necedah, WI, 54646. “I also encourage people to stop by the refuge or give me call if they have any questions or concerns about the plan,” added Wargowsky.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 93-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses more than 520 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 66 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

For more information about programs and activities of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the Great Lakes-Big Rivers Region, please visit our website at <http://midwest.fws.gov>